

764 On the day after the cremation of a corpse, the dead man's son
272 goes to the burial-ground, and on the spot where the dead man was
buried he pours successively a vessel of water and a vessel of milk.

Milk is a very valued commodity, and the ritual giving of milk
[431] indicates that solidarity is, or ought to be, prevalent between the
[828] giver and the recipient. It is also a symbol of pleasure, luxury, and
[765] happiness, and consequently mourners abstain from it while they
offer it to the spirit of the departed person. The mourners also
abstain from other valued objects like curd, honey, mushrooms,
meat, and betel leaves and areca-nut, which are again offered to
the dead person's spirit.

A kinsman who drank milk during the mourning-period would
be guilty of impiety towards the dead person. In the neighbouring
Kannada country it is considered a very bitter abuse to tell a
person, 'I will drink milk when you die.'

[302] The use of milk is extended from solidarity rites to other rites
which have either no reference to solidarity at all or at best only a
very indirect one. While ordinarily water is used in shaving a man,
milk is used while shaving a bridegroom. The dish containing the
milk and the shavings is later emptied at the foot of a milk-exuding
tree like the jack tree (*artocarpus integrifolia*). The placenta is
[844] similarly buried at the foot of a milk-exuding tree. One of the five
pillars of a marriage *pandal* has to be a branch of a milk-exuding
tree. After a corpse has been cremated the bones are consigned
either to a river or buried at the foot of a milk-exuding tree. At
[765] mourning, leaf-cups made from the leaves of the jack tree are used
to offer food to the spirit of the departed person.

XII

585 Everyone who performs *mūrta* to the subject should give a
431 money-gift, and the three married women are expected to give a
gold coin (*pombana*) each. At a wedding the mother of the bride
(or groom), and the groom while performing *mūrta* to the bride,
have to give a purse containing several coins, one of which should
be a gold coin.

A money-gift has to be given not only at *mangala* but on other
occasions as well: relatives who come to pay their last respects to
the dead man perform a series of solidarity rites at the end of which
they give a money-gift. Again, an infant has to be given a money-

783 is specially so where the structural distance between the two castes is very great. In Malabar and Coorg the ban on contact between different castes has been elaborately systematized. People belonging to two different castes have to maintain a certain minimum distance between them, and failure to do so results in the member of the higher caste being polluted. *Tindu polé* means the pollution that results from the failure to maintain the requisite distance between two people belonging to different castes.

A man is in a condition of ritual impurity in relation to a member of a higher caste while he is in a condition of ritual purity towards a member of a lower caste. The concepts of ritual purity and impurity systematize and maintain the structural distance between different castes. Caste hierarchy, on the other hand, makes these concepts relative, except with reference to castes at either extreme. The Brahmin is in a condition of purity in relation to all other castes, while the Untouchable is in a condition of ritual impurity to them. One of the most important Untouchable castes are the Poleyas (*polé+ya*). Holeyas are an important Untouchable caste of the Kannaḍa country, and Pulayans of Malabar. The names of each of these contain the local term for pollution.

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844 Events like birth and death result in polluting the *okka* in which the event has occurred, and certain other relatives. The pollution resulting from birth is milder than the pollution consequent on death. But in both cases pollution affects only the concerned kindred, and it is the means by which concern is defined and made known to everyone.

841 A woman is in a condition of *polé* for three days during her periods, and she becomes pure only on the fourth day after a bath in the morning. Formerly, the women of an *okka* had to live in an outhouse, at a little distance from the main building, during their periods. They had to maintain a certain distance from other members of the *okka*, and from other people in a condition of normal ritual status. They were specially required to keep away from the ancestor-shrine and from the cobra-platform. The cobra-deity was specially sensitive to defilement, and it was believed that if a woman approached the cobra-platform during her periods, the wrath of the deity would descend on the *okka* of which she was a member.

Coorg women do not nowadays observe any restrictions during their periods. This is surprising as elsewhere in south India these restrictions are still in force.

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severed from her conjugal *okka* the children are also severed from ⁵⁸⁶ their paternal *okka*. While the widow or divorcée automatically ⁷⁶⁸ reverts to her natal *okka*, her children have to be given rights at a special *sammanda* ceremony.¹

If, however, the widow or divorcée marries again, the children do not follow her automatically into her new husband's *okka*. They are members of their mother's *okka*, and the unanimous consent of the members of their mother's *okka* and that of the members of the mother's new husband's *okka* is necessary to transfer them from one to the other.

Elders usually make efforts to ensure that the children of an ⁸⁴⁸ unsanctioned union are given membership of their father's *okka*. ⁵⁹⁶ It is clearly recognized that he who had the pleasure of being ⁶²⁷ genitor has the duty of becoming pater as well, and this means that the children of an unsanctioned union have to be made members of the genitor's *okka*. Where, however, for various reasons the children cannot be given membership of their father's *okka*, they are given membership of their mother's *okka*. It is feared that if the children do not have membership in any *okka* people will refer to them contemptuously as 'the children born of adultery' (*mai kanat makka*).²

When a girl becomes pregnant as the result of union with a man not married to her, the girl's relatives press for recognition of the union. The man involved and his people might agree at once, in which case the girl's relatives have to go to the boys' home and give a feast to the relatives of the man and members of his village. The girl's relatives should carry with them all the provisions of this dinner, excepting mustard and salt.³

¹ The *sammanda* formulas used on this occasion are fundamentally similar to the formulas used in other cases. That is why I have not described them.

² In the folktale of Kanniaḍa Kāmāyya, the boy Kāmāyya's playmates refer to him contemptuously as 'one who is without a father'. Kāmāyya is greatly hurt by this and tells his mother that he will fast unto death if the identity and whereabouts of his father are not disclosed. His mother tells him that he is miraculously born, and that his father is the very sacred axe (*chandrāyudha*) which is a symbol for a deity. [539]

³ Among Coorgs as among other patrilineal and patrilocal castes of south India, a girl has her first confinement in her natal home. The first confinement is believed to be a dangerous and critical affair, and it is considered best for the girl to have her mother and other relatives of her natal home with her at this time. [547]

During the fifth or seventh month of a girl's first pregnancy, her mother and other relatives go to their affines carrying with them all the provisions of a

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848 After the dinner is over, the girl is given *sammanda* in the man's
596 *okka*. When the members of the man's *okka* agree to give *sam-*
627 *manda* after the girl has given birth to a baby, both the mother
and newly born child are admitted to membership.

Sometimes the agnatic relatives of the man might refuse to give *sammanda* to the woman and her children as long as both the man and woman are alive. But death of one of them might bring about a change in their attitude as the surviving spouse and children have important parts to play in the funeral ritual. If it is the woman who is dead, the giving of *sammanda* enables the corpse to be buried in the man's *okka*'s burial-ground.

The members of the genitor's village who are present when *sammanda* is given should be collectively paid witness-money of a rupee.

The procedure which has been described above holds good whether the woman concerned is a spinster or a widow.

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596 A Coorg proverb says, 'When the cattle-shed was destined to
428 come to an end only bull calves were born, and when the *okka* was
585 destined to come to an end only girls were born'. As mentioned
earlier, an *okka* is threatened with extinction if there are no male
heirs. If, however, there is an unmarried girl in such an *okka* she
is married in either the *okka parijé* or *makka parijé* way. In both
these forms the children born of the union perpetuate the mother's
natal *okka*.

In the *sammanda* ritual performed at an *okka parijé* marriage, the bride's family friend definitely asks the groom's family friend whether in view of the absence of heirs in the bride's *okka* the groom is prepared to stand as 'the trunk' of the bride's *okka*.

No *sammanda* ritual is, however, necessary at a *makka parijé* marriage as the groom does not become a member of the bride's *okka*. A rite is performed which makes clear the implications of the kind of union entered into: the bride's family friend says, 'Since there is no heir in Muthamma's natal *okka*, Ponnappa of such-and-such an *okka* has agreed to unite with Muthamma, and it is the

[844] dinner, barring salt and mustard. The salt and mustard are provided by the affines. The affines and members of the affines' village are invited to this dinner which is called *kul beppa* (keeping food). After the dinner has been given, the girl's relatives take the girl to her natal home.

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174 have been exterminated under such a state of affairs. But if the surviving
 726 brothers were to become the rightful husbands of the widows, a second and
 575 an undiminished generation might in time take the place of the fallen. In
 more recent times, the Rajas used to keep a large number of armed men
 constantly in attendance on themselves. They were absent from home for
 weeks and months. On their return, their brothers would have to go to
 the Palace or accompany the Raja on some hunting or fighting expedition.
 The brothers at home would then take the place of the absent from home
 [428] and family. It is clear that the law of inheritance by the sister's son is
 unknown among the Coorgs. This, according to Richter, affords the
 strongest proof that polyandry is no Coorg custom.

Widow Marriage

587 Widows may remarry. Should any of the deceased husband's
 brothers choose to marry her, he may do so or she may be married to any
 other man. By doing so, she acquires the rights of the second husband and
 relinquishes all interest in her late husband's property, but not in her
 children. A second marriage is celebrated in a quiet manner and only the
 nearer relatives and some of the villagers are invited to the marriage feast.
 The strewing of rice and other ceremonies are dispensed with. After the
 removal of signs of widowhood, the bride appears in the apparel of married
 life.

Divorce

586 A man can divorce an unfaithful wife, but a wife has no remedy
 against her husband in case of his faithlessness. The Takkas, the Aruva
 of the house, the Takkas of the village, and some members of the wife's
 family with her Aruva meet in the hall of the husband's house, when as at
 betrothal the lamp is put between them; and the Aruva solemnly relin-
 quishes the wife's claim to the husband's property. The children
 remain in the father's house and the unhappy woman returns with all her
 belongings to the parental roof. It has to be stated to the credit of Coorg
 women that such events are very rare.

Pregnancy and Childbirth

● 844 A woman's first confinement takes place at her mother's house
 whither she returns after the seventh month of pregnancy. There are no
 professional midwives among them. The women of the household who have
 846 experience for their guidance render all the assistance. A few hours after
 birth she is bathed in very hot water, and with the abdomen well bound
 up, she is brought to bed in a lying posture in the best room of the house.
 This practice is quite at variance with what prevails among other Hindus
 [783] who relegate a woman in childbirth to an outhouse. Though the period of
 pollution lasts for seven days, a woman enjoys immunity from all house-

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professed patronage of the Brahmins and that they gradually dropped into brahmanical habits of life and thought. A good many now wear the holy thread, and all profess to abstain from meat and fermented liquors. The return to Brahman initiation and dress was brought about by a Haviga Brahman whose family exercised spiritual influence over the Amma Kodagas. They are still unlettered. There is a tradition current among them that in former times one half of Coorg belonged to the Ammas, and the rest to the Coorgs. The Ammas by virtue of their priesthood held their land free of rent. Their lands are even now very lightly taxed.

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Internal Structure

The Amma Coorgs form a homogeneous community. There are two gotras among them, the Baradwaja gotra and Viswamitra gotra. They marry within the same gotra.

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Marriage Customs and Ceremonies

The Amma Coorgs do not intermarry with the Coorgs, but the separation may be of recent origin. Marriage settlement is made only after the agreement of horoscopes. The young man's father, uncle, and other close relations assemble, when coconuts, plantains, and betel leaves are handed to the bride in token of settlement. The auspicious day for celebration is fixed to send invitations to the relatives on both sides. The dress and ornaments to be given to the bride are also settled. The preliminary formalities that are gone through are:—

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1. The boy's party going to the house of the bride.
2. Their welcome with refreshments.
3. Nischithambulam.

The essential formalities are mukadarsana, and garlanding and panigrahana, tali-tying, presenting the bride with the wedding dress and ornaments, and feasting. There is no homam as among the Coorgs, but there exists the cutting of plantains in common with the Coorgs. On the arrival of the bride at the bridegroom's house, she puts rice on the lamp. On the third day they bathe, and celebrate the sobhanaprasta, if the girl has attained puberty already.

Pregnancy and Childbirth

When a girl becomes pregnant, pumavana and simantha are performed. When she is about to become a mother, she is confined to a separate room. Her mother or some aged woman acts as midwife. Pollution lasts for eleven days after which she bathes to become pure. But it is only after 40 days that ganja puja is performed, when she bathes and becomes pure. Only then can she enter the kitchen. Cradling the baby takes place on the eleventh day. The naming ceremony takes place the same day.

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d. Childbirth.

The birth of a child renders not only the mother of the new born babe, but the whole house unclean and every one who may come in contact with them. This ceremonial uncleanness (Sdtaka) lasts for 7 days, be the babe male or female. The mother is confined for 2 months to the house and not expected to engage in any work, but to recover her strength and to devote herself entirely to her child. This singular custom no doubt greatly contributes to the general good health and vigour of the Coorg women. Daughters are not much valued. They must be brought up and yet are destined to be entirely alienated from the house by their marriage. Boys are the stay of families. As soon as a Coorg boy is born, a little bow of a castor-oil-plant stick with an arrow, made of a leafstalk of the same plant, is put into his little hands, and a gun fired at the same time in the yard. He is thus, at taking his first breath, introduced into the world as a future huntsman and warrior. This ceremony, however, has almost lost its meaning and ceases to be generally observed. On the 12th day after birth, the child is laid into the cradle by the mother or grandmother, who on this occasion gives the name, which in many instances is both well-sounding and significant: thus for boys—Belliappa (silver-father), Ponnappa (gold-father), Mandanna (the brother of the village-green); for girls—Púvaka (flower-sister), Muttakka (pearl-sister), Chinnawa (gold-mother).

The cradle, woven of alit bamboos and cane, and fitted to be hung up for swinging, requires but a little trimming to render it as tidy as any fashionable berceauette; at all events the little Kodagu smiles and sleeps in it as happy as a prince; and as his mother bends over her darling with overflowing love and happiness and hums the Coorg lullaby:—

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 174 to have been of a rude character like the priests of ancient
 793 Britain and Germany, untractable and disinclined to adopt
 177 foreign culture. But the subtilty of the Brahmins gradually
 instilled into their minds some priestly notions which made
 them aspire after superior sanctity by adopting the sacred
 cord and a brahminical diet. It is said, that Timmappeyah,
 a Havige-Brahmin, and brother-in-law of the late Rajali, who
 died in 1868, as Karnika or Treasurer, gained such an influ-
 ence over the Amma-Codagaa, that many of them resolved
 upon laying aside the Coorg costume and imitating the
 Brahmins in dress and diet. There are even men amongst
 the Coorgs who under brahminical influence strive after some
 sort of sanctity by abstaining from the use of liquors and
 meat diet and by advancing brahminical interests. Brahmi-
 793 nism in Coorg, which found no favour with the Rajahs, ap-
 779 pears to be in the ascendancy under the liberal patronage of
 177 the British Government. If it were not for the rich stipends,
 1648 drawn from Government by the brahminical institutions in
 1659 Mercara and Táwunád, their present existence would be more
 than doubtful. Left to the support of the Coorgs alone, they
 would long ago have succumbed to starvation, for the essen-
 tial Coorg customs and religious practices can have little in
 common with Brahminism. There are old Coorgs who never
 once went to the Tale-Kávéri játre or had Brahmins perform
 any ceremony for them in their houses. All their lifetime
 they could do very well without them. Now the Brahmins
 find their staunchest supporters chiefly in Kiggatnád taluq
 and generally amongst the middle-aged Coorgs, and amongst
 such families whose reception by and assimilation with the
 Coorg-clan dates back to but recent generations. With them
 Brahmins are in requisition on many occasions. At the birth
 1844 of a Coorg child, they ceremoniously purify the defiled house
 1783 by sprinkling holy water within and without, for which they
 receive a gift in rice. At the Coorg wedding the Pájári of